



Howlers and Scalpers

I've heard about coyote sightings in the burbs, but now my intown newsletter is warning about them. What's up? The common coyote is in every Georgia county, but particularly Fulton and Gwinnett (for reasons as yet unstudied) and along the Chattahoochee corridor. As *Looney Tunes* taught us, they're wily and adaptable—if easily lured off cliffs—and can live on almost any food source. Long fur makes them look bigger than their thirty-five to forty pounds, however, so don't overestimate the interlopers (or mistake them for dogs—coyotes have bushier tails and longer legs). Georgia Department of Natural Resources senior wildlife biologist Don

McGowan's office received a few thousand coyote-related calls and e-mails last year, a figure that has grown gradually over the past decade. (The DNR lacks the funds and a pressing reason to investigate why.) Most report backyard sightings. There's also the odd missing pet report, but no complaints of howler-on-human violence have been filed. (Though they may exist.) Coyotes have always been identified in intown Atlanta neighborhoods, particularly places within prowling distance of Piedmont Park. Fill-in of the area's wooded spaces, though, may account for increased sightings, says McGowan. Or it could be the "beep-beeps!"

I'm considering becoming a Hawks ticket scalper to make a few extra bucks. Is it worth the risk? The posted signs are clear: It's illegal to resell—or offer to resell—tickets, for any price, within 2,500 feet of Philips Arena, the Georgia World Congress Center, the Georgia Dome, or Centennial Olympic Park. A Fulton sergeant deputy sheriff who has patrolled Hawks games for more than twenty years says the intersection of Marietta Street and Centennial Olympic Park Drive is the de facto Rubicon: East of Marietta, scalpers are left alone. West of it, the officer has issued quite a few criminal trespassing warrants to black-market businessmen. (I recently tried to negotiate with a nattily dressed man for a center-court Hawks seat. Bidding started at \$150; as I walked away, he went down to \$120.)

"They're getting better at what they do," says the officer. "Wearing suits and ties, saying things like, 'I was just giving this away to the pastor,' when we catch them." Perhaps ten scalpers, whose scheming faces he knows too well, are the real deal. They do serious statistical analysis and buy season tickets for the most promising teams around the state. A few dozen others are single-gamers in search of the old quick buck. (This is you.) The deputy always asks the ones he catches—who, if caught again, will pay a fine or spend a night in jail—why they do it. "Last year I made \$90,000," they say. They all say the same number."

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BY THE NUMBERS

PECKING ORDERS

Raising and processing chickens is an \$18.4 billion industry in Georgia, outperforming livestock and crops combined. That means our state is home to the most prolific poultry producers in the country. We also play host to the annual International Poultry Expo, held this month at the Georgia World Congress Center. —CHARLES BETHEA

6th

Georgia's rank on the list of the world's largest producers of broiler chickens (meaty birds that reach a harvest weight of four to six pounds in six to eight weeks), right behind India

12

Number of chicken-processing companies located here, including Tyson (a KFC supplier accused by PETA of allegedly abusing chickens), Pilgrim's Pride, and Wayne Farms

25%

Amount of Georgia poultry that is exported. One-fourth of that (\$722 million worth) goes to China, though its government may start levying tariffs on American chicken

29 million

Pounds of chicken produced here daily



240,000

Tons of manure "laid" by Georgia hens each year. (A Netherlands plant provides power to 90,000 homes using chicken manure. No such plants are slated here yet.)